ABSTRACT

Two protocols for inputting Chinese text data into a computer by using a pointing device on a soft keyboard are disclosed. One protocol is to be used with the Zhu-Yin phonetic system while the other one is to be used with the Pin-Yin phonetic system. Both protocols allow a user to enter a sequence of partial spellings of the characters of a phrase without inserting separation marks. Each partial spelling is entered by a single continuous device move. A program implementing the protocols insert separation marks automatically in the process of translating the sequence of user input event signals into a sequence of partial spellings. With the Zhu-Yin phonetic system, the input method is performed on a platform consisting of a soft keyboard and a phrase display window. The soft keyboard consists of a consonant section, a transition vowel section, a vowel section, a tone section, and several function keys. The layout of the soft keyboard is designed to facilitate the continuous move of the pointing devise for a sequence of press, touch, release, and touch (PTRT) operations. With the Pin-Yin phonetic system, the soft keyboard consists of an initial panel containing alphabet keys and subsequent next substring and remaining substring panels. The next substring and the remaining substring panels are shown dynamically on the screen to support PTRT-operations for entering sequence of partial Pin-Yin symbol strings similar to the PTRT-operations on the Zhu-Yin soft keyboard.

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